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2521
ASR-2

Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2264

May 29, 1986

CHERNOBYL EFFECTS UNCERTAIN

The extent to which the accident at Chernobyl nuclear power plant affected Eastern European agriculture is still uncertain, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The area most affected appears to be northeastern Poland, where about a fourth of the country's population lives and about a fourth of the agricultural production takes place. The European Community imposed a temporary ban on farm product imports from Eastern Europe and the Soviet.

U.S. 1985 EXPORTS TO E. EUROPE

U.S. agricultural exports to Eastern Europe in calendar 1985 fell 37 pct. from a year earlier to their lowest level since 1972, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Exports to all countries except Bulgaria fell sharply. Total grain exports came to \$113 million, down 29 pct. from 1984. The most dramatic decline was in U.S. soybean exports, which fell from \$228 million in 1984 to \$81 million. Little change in agricultural exports is expected in 1986. For fiscal 1986, exports are projected at \$540 million, up slightly from \$531 million in fiscal 1985.

E. EUROPEAN GRAIN PRODUCTION

Grain production in Eastern Europe in 1985 fell 7 pct. below the record 114 million tons in 1984 but was the region's third largest harvest, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Wheat production fell just over 10 pct. and coarse grain output was off 6 pct. The record 1984 grain crop made Eastern Europe a net grain exporter in 1985 for the first time in many years. However, this year Eastern Europe will again be a net grain importer. Net imports could be just over 4 million tons.

U.S. EXPORTS TO USSR

Private exporters reported on May 27 to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 100,000 metric tons of corn for delivery to the USSR during the 1985-86 marketing year. Sales of wheat and corn to the USSR for delivery during the third year of the Long Term Grain Supply Agreement now total 6,591,900 tons, of which wheat is 152,600 tons and corn is 6,439,300 tons. Sales of soybeans total 1,518,700 tons.

DAIRY CATTLE EXPORT

The U.S. Department of Agriculture surveyed the participants of the Dairy Termination Program on their intentions for the export of dairy cows, heifers and calves. Participants said about 95,000 of the 1½ million animals under the program would be exported.

SOVIET OILSEED
FORECAST FOR
1986/87

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Soviet oilseed production for 1986/87 is forecast at just over 11 million metric tons, up 300-thousand tons from this year. Most of the growth will be in sunflowerseed production, which is forecast at 5.4 million tons. Cottonseed production is forecast at 4.875 million tons.

EASTERN
EUROPE
A NET GRAIN
IMPORTER

The East European economies continued to recover from the crisis situation of the early 1980's, but growth in 1985 was slower than in 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The unusually cold 1984/85 winter weather, unforeseen foreign exchange shortages, and a further decline in economic incentives were major factors responsible for the unsatisfactory economic performance last year. Rising production costs and falling world prices for agricultural exports reduced farm profitability, held back production, particularly of livestock, and slowed the pace of reform in some countries.

WEEKLY CATTLE
SLAUGHTER

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates 36,900 head of dairy cattle were slaughtered in federally-inspected plants during the week ending May 10, 1986, as a result of the Dairy Termination Program. This includes all cows, heifers and calves identified as dairy animals designated for disposition in compliance with the program requirements. The cumulative total of cattle slaughtered under the program from April 1 through May 10 is an estimated 332,900 head.

REVISE
WHEAT
STANDARDS?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to revise U.S. wheat standards by certifying dockage to the nearest one-tenth pct. The current dockage certification method understates dockage by rounding down the actual dockage to the nearest half or whole percent. Rounding to one tenth pct. is more precise, fair and should enhance the marketability of U.S. wheat traded in export markets. The proposal would also establish that wheat protein content be determined on a constant 12 pct. moisture basis, rather than the current "as is" basis. (Submit public comments by July 14 to Lewis Lebakken, Jr., USDA-FGIS, Room 1661-S, Wash., D.C. 20250. Or call 202-382-1738.)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY,
SCHOOL LUNCH!

On June 4, the National School Lunch Program marks its 40th birthday as an official federal program, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cafeterias in about 90,000 schools all over the nation combine to serve more than 23 million students daily. Donated commodities make up about 30 pct. of the food. USDA provides more than 50 different kinds of food, including ground beef, chicken, turkey, canned fruits, fruit juices, vegetables, vegetable oil and flour. USDA is offering schools butter, cheese, nonfat dry milk, flour, honey and rice through the bonus commodity program, in addition to the regular donated commodities.

WHEAT POLL

On June 18, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin to poll wheat producers to determine whether or not they favor the imposition of mandatory limits on wheat production. Producers will be asked if they favor imposition of mandatory limits on production of wheat which will result in wheat prices that are not lower than 25 pct. over the cost of production. Each producer will be mailed a wheat poll ballot on June 18. The poll is non-binding upon the Sec'y of Agriculture and response by wheat producers is voluntary.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

CURRENT U.S. EXPORT OUTLOOK...U.S. agricultural exports for 1986 are forecast at 27.5 billion dollars, 12 percent below 1985 exports. USDA economist Steve MacDonald discusses the current outlook. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (196)

QUALITY OF U.S. GRAIN...Foreign buyer complaints about the quality of U.S. grain has touched off debate on the quality and grain standards issue. Dr. Kenneth Gilles, Administrator of USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service, examines the grain quality issue. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (197)

WOOD PRODUCTS TO JAPAN...The U.S. Department of Agriculture has launched a major program to increase exports of wood products to Japan. USDA analyst Larry Blum talks about the "Summit House," a wooden 3-story house in Tokyo which demonstrates the latest U.S. timber frame construction techniques and products. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (198)

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR PORK PRODUCERS...Dick Kesler, University of Illinois, focuses on pork production and management strategies and factors producers should consider when raising pigs. Gary Beaumont interviews. (199)

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION...A depressed farm economy has increased interest in alternative crops like fruits and vegetables. Farmers, however, shouldn't be too quick to jump into this business. John Gerber, University of Illinois, offers tips for market research. Gary Beaumont interviews. (200)



FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1513...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) Many countries around the world depend on the U.S. for producing grain surpluses for them to buy. However, Many countries compete with the U.S. for a share of the grain market. George Holmes takes an in-depth look.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1502...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Ethanol Assistance Program; A new soybean product; Yeoman and Yankee farmers; Reducing nitrate leeching.

CONSUMER TIME #995...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Avoiding food poisoning; Misleading energy claims; Camping and food safety; Eating in 2000; On the lamb.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Tues, June 10, Weekly weather and crop report; Crop production report; Fri, June 13, Milk production report; Mon, June 16, Cattle on feed; Fri, June 20, Catfish report. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

OFF MIKE

Hugh Robinson (KKOW, Pittsburg, Kans) sent us a beautiful postcard picturing the Great Wall of China. His comment: "Unbelievable! But true!!" No doubt we'll learn more upon Hugh's return ... Speaking of returning, we're just back from the NAFB Regional Meeting in Spokane, Wash. Wey Simpson (KXLY, Spokane) put together a very good program, including a tour of the magnificent Palouse country. NAFB president Ken Root (KWCH/KBS, Hutchinson, Kans) and president-elect Evan Slack (Evan Slack Network, Denver, Colo) were there. Evan flew to Pullman and met the tour there, and the three of us toured the Palouse by air on the way back to Spokane. Also, two Mikes were there: Mike Smith (Intermountain Net/KGHL, Billings, Mont) and Mike Side (KRAK, Sacramento, Calif). Kinda like Mutt and Jeff and both athletic. The Sacramento Mike played pro football with the Steelers as center/linebacker (this was back when you played both ways and came out of the game only as a last resort to staying alive) and the Billings Mike is a rodeo bullrider (in fact he competed in a rodeo before coming to the meeting). We asked him about the dangers of bullriding, and he said it wasn't for him...that in all the years he's been rodeoing he's only broken his little finger, "And that wasn't the bull's fault." He says his favorite way to get off the bull is to relax when the whistle sounds and let the bull buck him clear. Sounds like fun, doesn't it? ... We heard about the NAMA meeting in Dallas and how successful the NAFB participation was... especially the NAFB hospitality suite. Seems some Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders posing as farm broadcasters Roddy Peeples (VSA, San Angelo, Tex), Ed Slusarczyk (Ag Radio Net, Utica, NY), Mark Vail (Kansas Ag Net, Topeka, Kans), and Jim Stewart (KFYO, Lubbock, Tex)...or was it the other way around?...were quite a hit. With legs like those, how could they lose? ... Note from Paul Simpkins. He's looking for a farm broadcaster position, preferably in the Southeast. He held a similar position at WBAM, Montgomery, Ala, from 1953-1984. Call him at 205-288-3920.

Jim Johnson
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 Radio and Television Division

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
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Farm Broadcasters Letter
 Radio and Television, Rm. 410-A
 Office of Information, OGRA
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Washington, D.C. 20250

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